

Editorial

Challenges and Initiatives for the ASTMH's Journal: 2008 and Beyond

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The American Journal of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene is one of the ASTMH's centerpieces in the pursuit of a critical and time-honored mission—the dissemination of high quality science that is germane to the interests and aspirations of our members and other constituencies committed to promoting research and education as a means of improving global health. This mission was true for the predecessors of the modern journal, the *American Journal of Tropical Medicine*, first published in 1921, and the namesake of the current journal, established in 1952 as a result of the fusion of the *American Journal of Tropical Medicine* and the *Journal of the National Malaria Society*. The Editor in 1952, L.W. Hackett, commented that “the new Journal more comprehensive than the old [sic] in the expanded compass of its interests, hopes to offer its readers a broader sweep and richer content than before, and provide a channel of communication to the workers in every field of tropical medicine and hygiene.” In 2008, the *Journal* renews its pledge to these principles.

New paradigms and challenges to scientific publications need to be considered in 2008. Electronic submission, peer review, and publishing of scientific articles on the internet are now the norm. This technology alone has had a positive effect on the time between submission and publication of papers since electronic publishing was instituted by the *Journal*. More recently, the open access movement whereby the scientific literature is made freely and immediately available to the public via the internet has inverted the traditional business model of scientific publication from one where the financial burden is assumed by the consumer (reader) to one where it is assumed by the provider (author). With respect to the scope of subject matter covered by the *Journal*, the breadth continues to expand well beyond the classic tropical infectious diseases to include emerging and re-emerging pathogens, HIV, tuberculosis, and causes of ill health that were previously limited to the industrialized, developed world, e.g. cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, etc. It has also become apparent that interdisciplinary approaches and efforts that involve not only basic and translational biomedical research tools but also those rooted in the social sciences, economics, and anthropology are critical to advance knowledge of and potentially alleviate the multiple causes of global ill health. In this spirit, the *Journal* will initiate several features in 2008 to address these challenges. First, there will be a new monthly front matter section consisting of brief reviews of scientific topics and/or policy-advocacy perspectives rel-

evant to the interests of the Society. These papers may be solicited by the editors or submitted to the *Journal* by interested authors after receiving approval in response to an e-mail query sent to the managing editor (Cathi Siegel, cbs15@case.edu). Second, each monthly issue of the *Journal* will include a brief clinical case presentation and image or images that are of interest to the ASTMH. Authors can submit items for the “Images in Clinical Tropical Medicine” section online via the *Journal's* submission site. There will be no cost to authors for these front matter pieces, and all such papers will be available immediately by open access. Third, in recognition of the fact that funding agencies that support biomedical research strongly urge or require their benefactors to publish papers conforming to the open access model, the *Journal* will offer the option of publishing any paper in this category for a modest fee. The precise cost will be determined shortly and will be published on the *Journal* website. The *Journal* will continue its long standing policy of making all its content available immediately and freely to non-profit institutions in developing countries via the Health InternetNetwork Access to Research Initiative (HINARI) set up by the World Health Organization and major publishers.

The American Journal of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene continues to be one of the premier scientific periodicals committed to publishing papers concerned with global and tropical health issues in its ever evolving iterations. We will continue our legacy of publishing papers on a wide variety of topics and disciplines relevant to global health, of not limiting our scope to selected diseases or disciplines, and of promoting the publication of papers by authors who live and work in tropical disease-endemic areas of the world as well as those who reside in economically advantaged regions. We invite our readers, authors, and others with an interest in promoting research and education on global health problems to help shape this vision.

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